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MEDIA RELEASE
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REMINDER FROM DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

ON THE UNIFORMED AND OVERSEAS CITIZENS ABSENTEE VOTING ACT

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE: United States Attorney Tom Colantuono announced today that the Department of Justice is taking steps to remind friends and relatives of soldiers serving abroad and other citizens living abroad that, despite their assignments abroad, they still have the opportunity to vote in this year's elections.

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act ("UOCAVA") requires that any military or overseas voter who has applied for an absentee ballot by the 30th day before a federal election must be given an opportunity to vote by absentee ballot. Particularly at a time when so many of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines are literally putting their lives on the line in order to preserve the basic freedoms and democratic values that represent the core of our nation, ensuring that these individuals are able to participate fully in the electoral process is an extraordinarily important mission. This effort means taking whatever steps are necessary to help guarantee that these uniformed and overseas citizens receive their absentee ballots in a sufficiently timely fashion so as to be able to return the ballots and have them counted in the November election.

As part of "Armed Forces Voters Week," military and overseas voters are encouraged to mail their applications for absentee ballots to state officials as early as possible before the general election on November 2, 2004, in order to ensure that their ballots can be mailed and returned in time to be counted. UOCAVA eligible citizens may use Standard Form 76, also known as the Federal Post Card Application ("FPCA"), to register and request an absentee ballot. The FPCA is available online at www.fvap.gov/pubs/onlinefpca.html. Due to mail transit delays, local election officials need to mail absentee ballots to voters a minimum of 30 days prior to the election in order for overseas citizen voters to receive the ballots in time to vote and return them.

Voted absentee ballots, meanwhile, should be mailed by the voters to the election officials indicated on the ballot no later than October 15, 2004, in order to best ensure that they arrive in time to be counted. Voters may alternatively use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot if their official absentee ballot doesn't reach them in time, but they may do so *only if* they earlier timely submitted a Federal Post Card Application, and complied with any other restrictions that vary from state to state.

Additional information can be found at the Justice Department's website, www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/misc/activ_uoc.htm, as well as the website of the Federal Voting Assistance Program of the Department of Defense, www.fvap.gov (for Armed Forces Voters Week, see www.fvap.gov/services/afvw.html).

If a voter discovers that absentee ballots have not been mailed out, he should immediately contact Rebecca Wertz of the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division's Voting Section at (202) 514-6342.

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